DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 132 222 UD 016 601

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TITLE Ethnicity: Its Implications for Teaching in Urban Secondary Schools.
PUB DATE Nov 75
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the National Conference on Urban Education (1st Kansas City, Missouri, November 24-26, 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS African American Studies; Arabs; Case Studies; Cultural Background; Cultural Education; Cultural Factors; Curriculum Development; Educational Development; *Ethnic Groups; *Ethnic Studies; Mexican Americans; *Models; Negroes; *Secondary Schools; *Urban Teaching

ABSTRACT

This paper examines some theoretical models and approaches in ethnic education and the implications for schools in populous and diverse urban centers. It then focuses on four ethnic heritage groups that frequently populate urban areas--Afro-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Arab-Americans, and Irish-Americans. These four ethnic groups are used as case studies and examples for examining issues and problems in developing ethnic education for our multicultural and highly diverse society. The theoretical models and approaches are introduced by noting that Andrew Greeley has made a distinct contribution by detailing various perspectives for the study of ethnicity. His various models for describing the dynamics of ethnicity are presented here, as well as one developed by the staff of the Ethnic Heritage Studies Project, for use in preparing curriculum materials. As a conclusion for this paper, several of the student activities from the project which are currently being developed are included as an example of the impact of ethnicity and teaching in multicultural, urbanized society. (Author/JM)

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ETHNICITY: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING IN URBAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

A paper prepared for the First National Conference on Urban Education -- November 24 - 26, 1975

Crown Center Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri

by:

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ABSTRACT

Title: Ethnicity: Its Implications for Teaching in Urban Secondary Schools

By: Edith W. King, Professor of Educational Sociology and the Ethnic Heritage Studies Project, University of Denver

Stimulated by the 1974 funding of the Title IX, Ethnic Heritage Studies Program Act, projects and programs for implementing ethnic heritage curriculum materials in the secondary school curriculum particularly in urban areas, have multiplied. Currently, social scientists have been emphasizing how ethnicity shaped our values, attitudes and behavior. Experts in ethnic studies feel that ethnic affiliation influences groups in their political and economic behavior, as well as their social and cultural life and their educational aspirations for their children.

This paper will examine some theoretical models and approaches in ethnic education and the implications for schools in populous and diverse urban centers. It will go on to focus on four ethnic heritage groups that frequently populate urban areas --- Afro-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Arab-Americans and Irish-Americans. These four ethnic groups will be used as case studies and examples for examining issues and problems in developing ethnic education for our multi-cultural and highly diverse society.

Ethnicity: Its Implications for Teaching in Urban Secondary Schools

by Edith W. King

with the assistance of Gary Smith

and Andrew Smith, Center for Teaching

International Relations, University of Denver

Introduction: A New Awareness of Ethnicity

As the activities of America's Bicentennical Year celebration reach the zenith, awareness of ethnicity and the manifold heritages that characterize this country continues to grow. Suddenly the literature of the social sciences, particularly in anthropology, sociology and linguistics, on socialization, enculturation, acculturation, assimilation and cultural diffusion has become popular and current again. Social scientists, educators, and even the lay public are asking, "What is ethnicity?"

Ethnicity connotes a sense of peoplehood derived from family and kinship ties that have existed over generations and hence have developed a shared cultural and social heritage. Ethnicity shapes the values, attitudes and behavior of people. Research shows that ethnic affiliations influence groups in their political and economic behavior (Greeley, 1974; Marger, 1974), as well as in their social and cultural life. Gordon (1964) has stated that the intensity of ethnic feeling varies among members of any ethnic group. Ethnic awareness varies from group to group. Individuals use ethnicity as a filter for forming their identity. Ethnic affiliations function to organize interactions among individuals and groups of people, whether on social, economic,

political or religious lines. Ethnicity is now recognized as a central force in socialization, a force that is at work over time as well as space.

Ethnic Heritage Studies in the Schools

Stimulated by the 1974 funding of the Title IX, Ethnic Heritage Studies Program Act, projects and programs for implementing ethnic heritage curriculum materials in the schools have multiplied. These projects and programs have particular emphasis for and have been mainly focused on secondary schools in urban or metropolitan areas of the United States where the multi-cultural heritage of America is most prominent. One of these projects that exemplifies this focus on urban ethnicity and its implications for secondary schooling is the project of the Center for Teaching International Relations, in the Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver. Titled, "Continuing Ethnic Heritage: A Curriculum Project on the Transnational Linkage of Four American Ethnic Groups", this program will develop curriculum units for secondary school students focussed on four ethnic groups -- Afro-Americans, Arab-Americans, Mexican-Americans and Irish-Americans. The major emphasis of this project is the linkages with the home country or motherland. The staff of the Project feels there is a distinct need for educators, teachers and students to become aware of the importance of channels of linkage between the ethnic group here in the United States and the home country.

The project will not only consider the four ethnic groups in the American milieu, but will also take a cross-cultural perspective and emphasize transnational linkages in the past. Most importantly, however are linkages that arise from the current situations in the countries or areas of the world where these ethnic groups had their origins, i.e. the Middle East, Ireland, the various nations of Africa, and Mexico.

The Project staff feels that an educational orientation of active participation or an action-oriented, process approach is a key factor in developing curriculum materials and activities for the secondary level. We would eschew a strongly descriptive approach to ethnic heritage studies for the secondary school level in favor of teacher and pupil materials that feature student participation such as field research and trips, stimulations, games, interviews, oral histories, etc. This action-oriented approach goes hand-in-hand with a Piagetian-based theoretical approach to learning and intellectual development.

In developing curriculum materials for this project we are drawing upon the information and experience gained from the analysis of curriculum materials in ethnic heritage studies done by the EHS projects carried out in the previous year under the Title IX, EHS Act. Some of the concerns and shortcomings discovered through the analysis of already existing materials in ethnic heritage studies include: emphasis on heros and well-known names of the ethnic group or "hero-prone" content for EHS materials; emphasis on quaint customs and traditions, such as specific foods or modes of dress; historical coverage of ethnic groups in the U.S. up to the waves of immigration in the 1890's to the 1920's only and no consideration of current immigrants to the U.S. The favored approach in ethnic heritage studies for secondary school students was generally a static, descriptive one which we wish to replace with a dynamic up-to-date currency that implies a future orientation and <u>not</u> one of looking backward, historically.

Theoretical Models and Approaches For Studying American Ethnicity

In his book, Ethnicity in the United States: A Preliminary Reconnaissance (1974) Andrew Greeley makes a distinct contribution to the literature on ethnicity by detailing and diagramming various perspectives for the study of ethnicity. He culminates his overview by offering an alternative perspective. We present here the various models for describing the dynamics of ethnicity and then add one of our own, developed by the staff of the Ethnic Heritage Studies Project, Center For Teaching International Relations, University of Denver, for use in preparing our curriculum materials.

The Greeley Models are to be understood more clearly if we break down the term ethnicity into several components - "ethnic identification", "ethnic heritage" and "ethnic culture,"

Ethnic identification is defined as "the place in which one puts oneself in the ethnic chart."

Ethnic heritage is defined as "the explicit and conscious recollection of one's past history, either in the Old World or in the United States".

Ethnic culture means attitudes, personality styles, and behaviors that correlate with ethnic identification or ethnic origin." (Greeley, 1974, p. 310) Quoting from Ilona Fabian, Greeley points out that ethnicization is the process by which immigrants from one society become ethnics in another. He asserts that ethnicity is not a way of withdrawing from the rest society so much as a technique for dealing oneself into society. In the United States one can be as ethnic as one wants to be. But one is under no obligation to declare a specific ethnicity. All this leads to the conclusion that we have in the United States, a condition of "unstable pluralism". This Greeley

labels a view of social reality that tells the individual that in order to be "anybody" you have to be "somebody", some distinct ethnicity. So we are not moving toward a state of assimilation and homogenization in American society. Rather we are in a state of dynamic flux for which Greeley calls for a "pluralism of perspectives for considering the phenomena of unity and diversity within (our) society" (Greeley, 1974, p. 307).

This perspective he labels "ethnogenesis." It takes into consideration that immigrants had some values, mores, attitudes and beliefs in common with the host culture, whenever they arrived. For example, the Irish spoke the English languages and had some political behaviors in common with U.S. styles. "Certain aspects of the immigrant heritage are emphasized and developed in response to the challenge of American society." The result is that today in American society, some descendants of the immigrant groups are more distinctive, more ethnic than their predecessors. Social class and religious affiliation influence the degree of ethnic identification of individuals. The time line or historical aspects also influence the degree of acculturation and assimilation of the immigrant group. Greeley posits the following models:

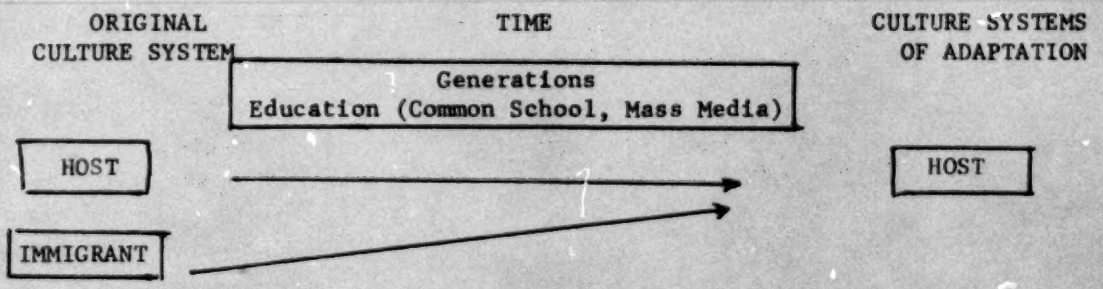


Figure 1- Anglo conformity perspective. (Greeley, 1974, p. 304)

Anglo conformity - Perspective: Host and immigrant systems are separate to start with. Through time, as the immigrants extend their generations in the United States, they become more and more like the hosts. Finally, at a certain moment either in the present or yet to come, host and immigrant are part of one common American culture, which remains the Anglo-American host culture.

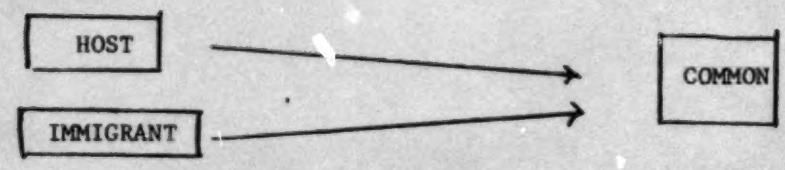


Figure 2 - Melting Pot Perspective. (Greeley, 1974, p. 305)

"Melting Pot" In this figure the movement is not completely of immigrant toward host, but of host and immigrant toward each other, so that the common American culture that emerges is a combination of two cultures, though it is never clear how much and what the host culture absorbs from the immigrant. Romanticized version of the immigrant experience.

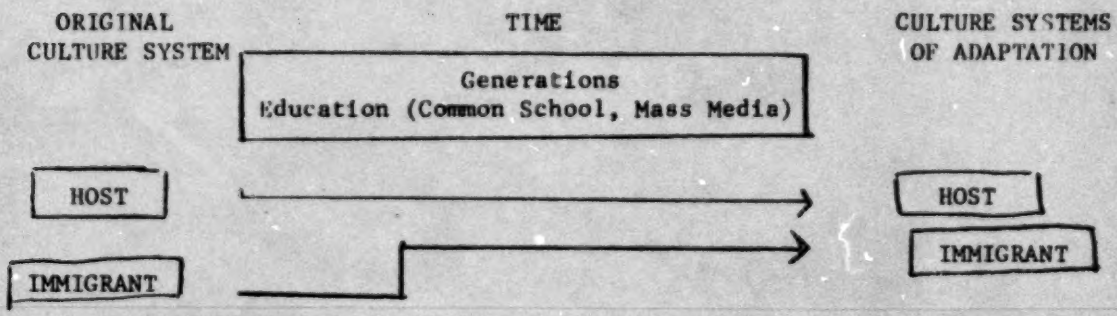


Figure 3 Cultural Pluralism perspective. (Greeley, 1974, p. 306)

Cultural Pluralism Perspective- The immigrant becomes like the host to some extent; he becomes an American citizen, he commits himself to American political values, etc. He learns the English language and enjoys the common mass media as well as the media of his own group.

Figure 4 - Acculturation but not assimilation perspective.

(Greeley: 1974, p. 306)

Acculturation, but not assimilation perspective

In this figure the immigrant is absorbing large numbers of cultural traits from the host, and the host is picking up a few traits from the immigrant. What emerges is a common culture that both immigrant and host share.

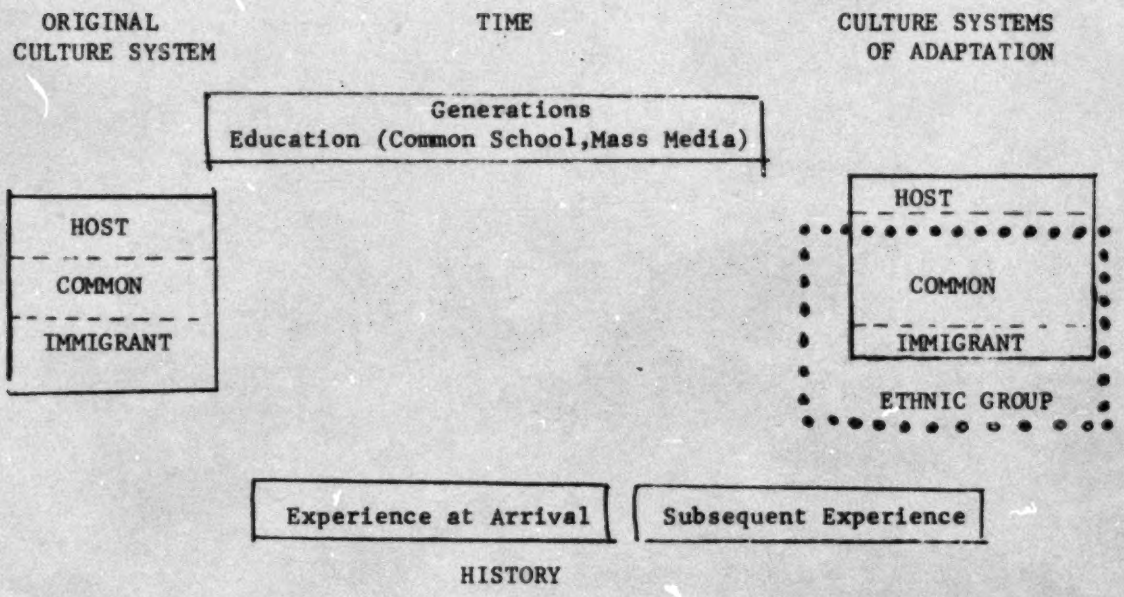


Figure 5 - Ethnogenesis Perspective. (Greeley, 1974, p. 309)

Ethnogenesis Perspective: Indicates that the host and immigrants may have had something in common to getin with. Some of the Irish, for example spoke the English language and understood western political styles. Under the influence of education, generation, and the experiences in American society both at the time of immigration and subsequently, the common culture grows larger. Immigrants become more like the host, and the host may become somewhat more like the immigrants. Certain immigrant characteristics persist, but in addition, under the impact of the experience of American life, some traits become more rather than less distinctive. Illustrates that the ethnic group has a combination of traits shared with other groups and traits that are distinctive to its own group.

As well as a historical and sociological perspective on ethnogenisis or the dynamics of ethnicity, Greeley calls for a cross-national and comparative study of ethnic groups to enlarge our understanding of the phenomena in the U.S. Some other issues he raises that are pertinent to the work of our Project in Transnational Linkages and Curriculum Development are:

1) Ethnicity is not just another way of looking at social class. Ethnic diversity is independant of social class differentiation.

2) Studies of socialization in the family structure are greatly needed. We do not know how children of ethnically mixed marriages identify themselves. What and how are ethnically linked traits transmitted?

3) Ethnic diversity appears not to be socially dysfunctional in America and white ethnics are not generally alienated.

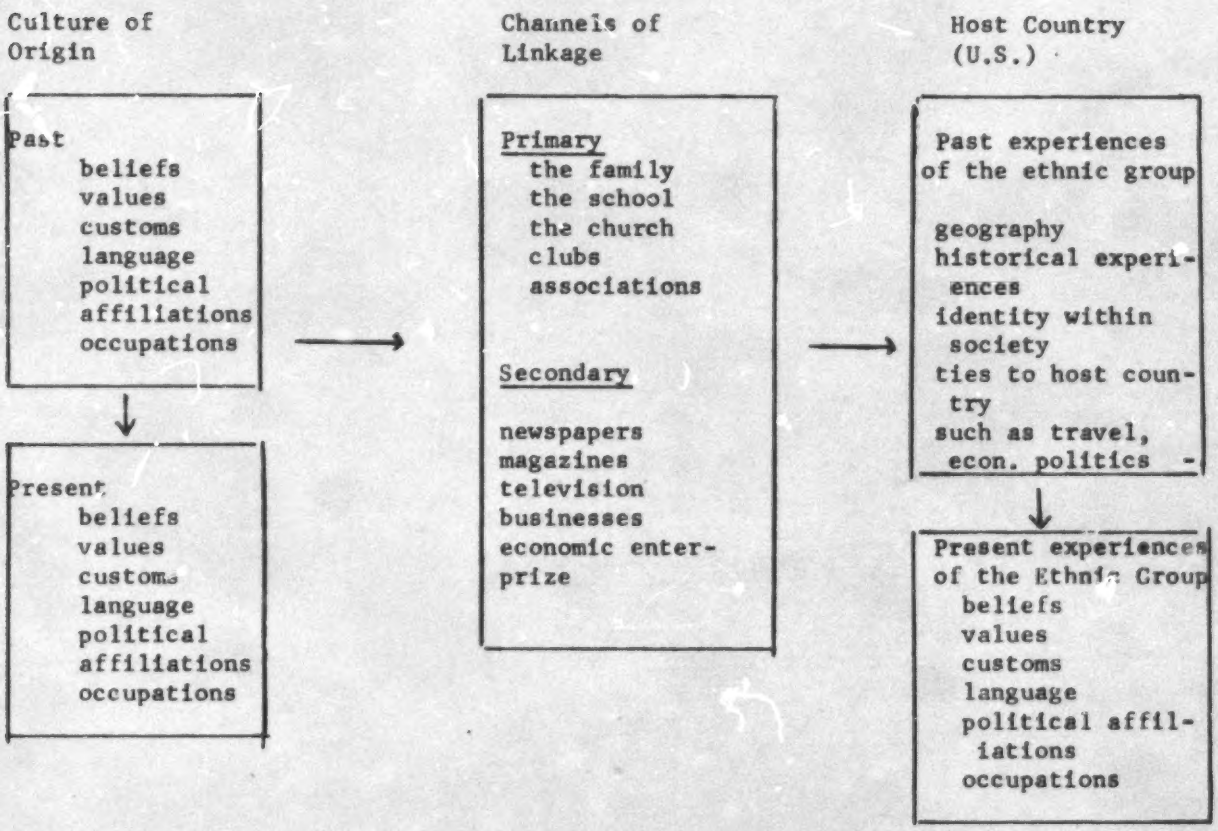
4) Geographical location in the U.S. effects ethnic identification and ethnic affiliations. For example, Greeley states that the Chicago Irish claim to be appalled at the parochialism of the Irish in Boston and New York. (p.311)

Some other issues we will examine in the preparation of the curriculum materials for our project are: what is the degree of interaction between ethnic groups both socially and politically, and how does it apply to the four ethnic groups we are working with? How does ethnic affiliation effect the individual's political behavior and also how one spends one's money? What role does language and linguistic patterns play in the dynamics of ethnicity?

We could posit a continuum for ethnic affiliation from non-recognition of one's ethnicity in one's daily life and activity to an almost complete identification with one's ethnic group in all activities and choices. Further, does ethnicity have any validity for the individual if it is not expressed in participatory ways?

A Model For Conceptualizing The

Transnational Linkages of Ethnic Groups*



A Model For Conceptualizing Transnational Linkages and Ethnic Groups

The model that is shown above, has been developed by the staff of the EHS Project, University of Denver, to assist in the construction of monographs by ethnic scholars on the four ethnic groups, as well as the student activities and units to be prepared by the staff. The conceptual aspects of channels of linkages in this model consist of: 1) primary sources -- i.e. the family, the school, the church, social clubs and organizations; and (2) secondary sources -- i.e. newspapers, magazines, television, businesses, economic organizations, political organizations. The content aspects of channels of linkages would be described as: language, travel, money, organization membership, in other words, physical or tangible items. The model stresses the linkages between groups in the United States and their antecedents in the home country or region from where they immigrated. The model also recognized the importance of historical influences on the migration of groups.

*developed by the Staff of the EHS Project C.T.I.R. University of Denver

Some Generalizations Across the Four Ethnic Groups

As we focus on the four ethnic groups with which this project is involved, it is useful to set down some specific areas or topics which can concern us across the four ethnic groups. We can list the following generalizations that can be studied across the four ethnic groups -- Arab-Americans, Irish-Americans, Afro-Americans, and Mexican-Americans:

...immigration of the ethnic group to America -- why did they come? When did they come? Are they still immigrating to the U.S.? Where have they settled? Is the ethnic group prone to remaining in one location in the U.S. or are its members mobile in America, too.?

...extent of diversity within the ethnic group -- i.e. is there social class diversity, religious diversity, linguistic diversity? Does the ethnic group manifest a variety of attitudes and values toward aspects of American life? Does the ethnic group represent a block politically and economically or are they diverse in their behavior in these areas?

...historical and time line perspectives for the ethnic group --- does the length of time in the U.S. effect the life styles of the group? Has events in the country of origin both in the past and currently effect the attitudes and values of the ethnic group members / such as the degree of assimilation or the return to the new ethnicity?

...racial and religious characteristics of the group -- does skin color and features effect opportunities for economic and social advancement in the U.S.? Is religious practice a deterrant to advancement in the U.S.?

...linguistics styles and language useage -- does the language of the ethnic group enhance or retard successful functioning in the U.S.? Does language spoken and bilingualism place the group at a disadvantage in educational opportunities in the U.S.?

...dynamic of conflict within the group -- are there many fractions and fractionalization within the ethnic group or does the group represent quite a homogenious quality where members hold like values and attitudes?

...perception of the ethnic group members of their acceptance by the major American culture -- i.e. do the majority of the group feel they recognized and valued citizens of the U.S.?

For example, Aswad reports that "When the Arab sample was asked if they felt the U.S. newspapers were fair in their presentation of the Middle Eastern situation, two thirds of those who answered said no and two-thirds said they felt that their culture is not presented accurately in the U.S." (Aswad, 1974, p. 70)

...educational opportunities of the ethnic group -- how does family structure, nuclear or extended family grouping, kinship systems, child-rearing practices effect the social organization or disorganization in the group? Are there aspects of socialization and enculturation that prove disfunctional?

... degree of urbanization of the ethnic group -- does the members of the ethnic group live solely in cities? In the inner-city? In ghettoes of large metropolitan areas? Or do members live and work in both urban and rural areas? How does this effect the diversity of the group?

... ties to the "mother country"-- what is the effect of linkages to the country of origin, both historically and currently? Does this cause factionalism within the group?

... future directions and expectation of the ethnic group -- what are the implications for the new ethnicity on the future of ethnic groups, especially the four we are working with, in the U.S.?

Conclusion: Implications For Teaching in Urban Schools

In order to translate the theorizing and model building into practice in the classroom and to make the dynamics of ethnicity meaningful for students and their teachers we, the staff of the University of Denver's Ethnic Heritage Studies Project, are developing several series of student activities and units on the issue of ethnicity, generally, and on the specific heritages of Afro-Americans, Arab-Americans, Irish-Americans and Mexican-Americans. We reiterate that our emphasis is on the transnational linkages of the ethnic groups and the situation in the United States today and for the future. We feel this emphasis is unique and innovative for Ethnic Heritages Studies at the secondary school level. It also is particularly pertinent for students living in the urban milieu and attending city schools where ethnic diversity is almost a certitude as a result of the increasing press of desegregation and bussing.

As a conclusion for this paper, we include several of the student activities we are currently developing (See Appendix A) from our project, as an example of the impact of ethnicity and teaching in multi-cultural, urbanized society.

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APPENDIX A

Experimental Drafts of Student Activities

for Secondary School Level

from the Ethnic Heritage

Studies Project

Center For Teaching International

Relations

Director: Andrew Smith

University of Denver

Prepared by:

Gary Smith
Edith King
George Otero

Experimental Draft

Student Activity:

prepared by
Gary Smith

Ethnic Conflict and Superordinate Goals

Introduction to the Unit: One problem with focusing on ethnicity and on particular ethnic groups is that such a focus seems to imply that these groups can and should function apart from each other; that each group should function with its own peculiar set of political ends in mind, its own identity and its own ways of behaving. All of this by implication is done irrespective of functioning and cooperating with other ethnic groups and peoples. Obviously, this sort of "every group does its own thing" tupe of separatism does not explain the reality of a society such as the United States trying to function as a whole. Furthermore, such an implication leaves to question the notion that there are instances when many ethnic groups seem to be willing to subordinate their own immediate goals for causes that transcend their ethnic identities. What happens, for example, if the United States were to be suddenly attacked by a foreign power on our own soil? Would the national crisis preclude ethnic considerations? In most cases, it probably would.

This unit is designed to initiate thinking and discussion about ethnic conflict and its relationship to superordinate goals. The primary focal question is: how can an ethnic group retain its solidarity and beliefs as a group and still function with other groups to attain ends important to all groups?

Several assumptions underlie this unit:

1. If two groups of people compete with each other, they will develop unfavorable attitudes toward one another.
2. If the two groups become hostile towards one another, mere contact will not promote cooperation.
3. If the two groups are placed in a situation requiring the talents and resources of both groups, cooperation will result in some fashion, provided each group perceives the goal of the situation to be beneficial to them.
4. It is possible for a group to retain elements of its identity as a group, yet attain and cooperate with other groups to attain goals that are beneficial to all groups.

The set of activities included are based on the following works: Muzafer Shafer's Experiments in group conflict; Margaret Jarman Hagood and Daniel O. Price, STATISTICS FOR SOCIOLOGISTS, rev. ed. (New York: Sidney Holt and Company, 1953), pp. 14-17; "Images of People," Episode from SOCIOLOGICAL RESOURCES FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (Rockleigh, New Jersey: Allyn and Bacon, 1969), Instructor's Guide, pp. 38-39 and Student Booklet, pp. 17-23; "organizations Among Nations," AEP Public Issues Series Pamphlets (Columbus, Ohio: Xerox Corporation, 1969), pp. 55-58.

Title: Getting Our Group Together

Introduction: The following role-play places your students in two arbitrarily chosen groups. Each group is given a set of tasks designed to instill a sense of group solidarity and identity in its members. Opportunities are provided to "ham it up" and to devise symbols and language exclusive of other groups.

Objectives:

To recognize the power of group solidarity and the role of symbols in developing feelings of "onenesss"

To recognize under what circumstances groups become exclusive of other groups

Time: One class period

Setting and Materials Required: Two separate rooms for each group to meet in (at a minimum you should isolate two corners of your classroom so that students in each group cannot see and hear the students in the other group; you may find that students insist on having two separate rooms); construction paper, marking pens, scissors, and role of masking tape for putting on symbols.

Procedure:

1. Introduce students to the unit by explaining that for the next 3-4 days they will be participating in an experiment designed to emphasize some of the dimensions of ethnic conflict. Divide class into two groups; we suggest you simply have students count off by twos, then ask all the "ones" to form and group and all the "twos" to form the other group.
2. Explain to both groups that they will be given a list of tasks to perform in a few minutes and that each group will have the same list.
3. Guide each group to a separate room or area of the classroom. Explain to each group that they will have 30 minutes in which to complete the list of tasks. Distribute the Student Handout (no. 1) entitled "Group Tasks." Allow 30 minutes before going on to step 4.
4. Bring all students back together again. As they enter the room, tell them they may sit any place they like in the room. When they are all seated, ask the following: Were either of the two groups unable to accomplish all of the tasks? (If so, you might consider allowing additional time at the beginning of next period to complete the list.) During the final five-ten minutes of the period, jot down observations regarding what you see to be developing as inter-group rivalry or feelings. (Did the groups tend to sit with members of their own kind? Was there any reference to the other group that was derogatory? Etc.) Tell the students that tomorrow they will be participating in some games involving competition between the two groups.

GROUP TASKS

During the next 30 minutes you and the other members of your group should accomplish the following tasks. All decisions should be reached by group concensus, in other words, decisions must be satisfactory to most everyone in your group.
There are six things for you group to decide and agree upon:

1. Choose a name for your group.
2. Choose a symbol for your group. Using the construction paper and pens, make up badges with the symbol on them and distribute to all in the group to wear. (Optional)
3. Make up a slogan for your group.
4. Devise pass words or secret words for members of your group. (3 or 4 key words will do)
5. Make up at least 2 jokes about people who are not members of your group. (Optional)
6. Decide upon a common mode of clothing to wear for the next 3 days--something that will identify you as members of the same group. (Optional)
(Suggestion: If your group would like to, you might have a silkscreening party. Using old T-shirts, your group could silk screen their symbol or a certain slogan on them and wear them the next 3 days to identify group members.)

Title: Competition
Introduction: During the course of this activity the two groups formed in "Getting Our Group Together" participate in two competitive games to present the class with experiences in intergroup competition. One of the primary goals of the activity is to emphasize that mere contact does not promote understanding and harmony.
Time: One Class Period
Materials: One piece of strong rope, about 25' in length. Push desks back against the walls. Draw a line in the middle of the floor with a piece of chalk to prepare for tug-of-war contest.
Procedure:
1. Once again, instruct the two groups to meet in their respective rooms for about 10 minutes. Distribute copies of Student Handout 2, "Games" to members of both groups.
2. Allow about 15 minutes a piece for each of the two games to be played.
3. Distribute copies of the Attitudes Survey, Student Handout 3. Instruct students to circle their responses within the next 5 minutes.
4. Homework for selected students: Group of students should compile results of the questionnaire and construct a bar graph as noted in Student Handout 4, "Tabulating the Survey."

STUDENT HANDOUT 2

GAMES

During this class period you and other members of your group will form a team to participate in two games with the other group in the room. After each game, your teacher will declare the winner!

Game 1: TUG-OF-WAR - This old game is the one where two teams pull on opposite ends of a rope to see which team can pull the other over a center line first. Your teacher has pushed back your desks and drawn a line in the center of the room for purposes of playing the game. You may handle this task by electing a leader or someone to spur on your team. Good luck, and may the best team win!

Game 2: QUICK ANSWER QUIZ - This game is based on the old TV show, College Bowl. Your teacher will open your class textbook or an encyclopedia and ask a series of 10 questions of both groups. Each right answer is worth 10 points. Each wrong answer is worth -5 points. You must choose a spokesman for your group. He or she will confer with the rest of the members of your group to arrive at the correct answer to each question after it is asked. RULE: your spokesman is the only one designated to speak for you; answers blurted out by other members of your group will consititute a penalty and 5 points will be deducted from your score. As soon as your team has decided upon an answer, your spokesman should raise his/her hand to be recognized by your teacher. The team responding first, gets first crack at the answer. The winner of the 10 question contest will be the team who scores the most points. Good luck, and may the best team win!

ATTITUDES SURVEY STUDENT HANDOUT 3

After having experienced the past two class periods in your please respond the following short questionnaire by circling the answers you wish to:
(Fill the name of the other group in the appropriate blanks.)

1. How many of the_____do you think are fair when they play games?
   None A Few Some Most All
2. How many of the_____do you think are trustworthy?
   None A Few Some Most All
3. How many of the_____do you think care about the kids in your group?
   None A Few Some Most
4. How many of the_____do you feel are friendly to your group?
   None A Few Some Most

TABULATING THE SURVEY

Compile the results of the survey for each group separately. Make two sets of charts, one set for each group's views of the other. Be prepared to draw the bar graphs on the chalkboard for the class tomorrow.

Step 1: Count up the number of responses marked "None" then "A Few" then "Some" etc. for each question.

Step 2: Convert the numbers compiled in step one to percentages of the whole group (not the whole class!).

Step 3: Make a chart like the one illustrated below for each of the four questions:

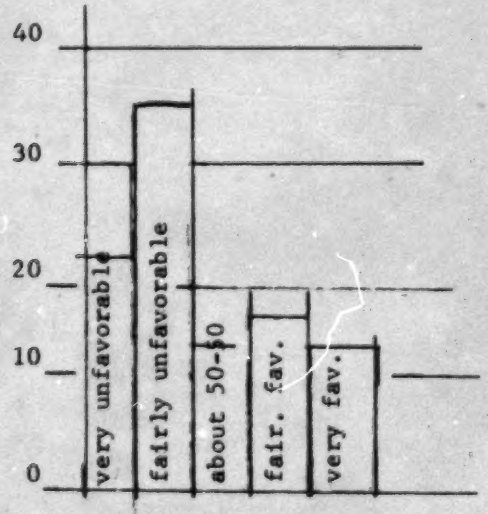
Question 1: SAMPLE

How many of the_____ do you think are fair when they play games? Categories:	What the __(Dogs)__ think of the __(Cats)__ Percent of Answers	What the __(Cats)__ think of the __(Dogs)__ Percent of Answers
None	21.2%	36.5%
A Few	31.8	40.4
Some	12.1	7.7
Most	19.7	9.6
All	15.2	5.8
	100.0%	100.0%

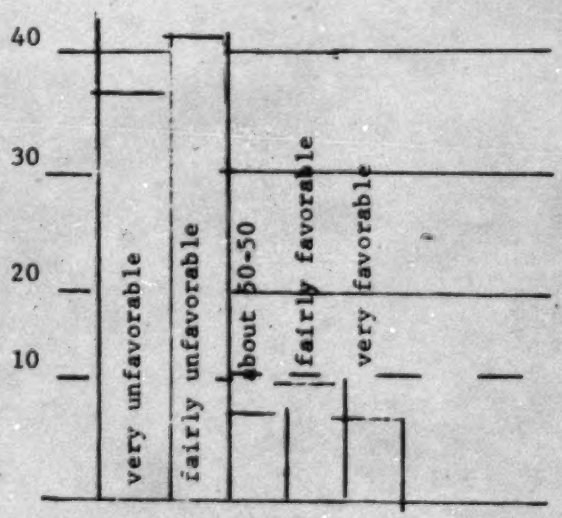
Step 4: Convert each of the categories as follows:

None = Very Unfavorable
A few = Fairly Unfavorable
Some = About 50-50
Most = Fairly Favorable
All = Very Favorable

Then, using these new categories make bargraphs for each questions as shown below:



What the Dogs think of the Cats - Question 1
FAVORABLENESS



What the Cats think of the Dogs - Question 1
FAVORABLENESS

Experimental Draft

Student Activity: HOW IMPORTANT IS ETHNICITY TO ME?

Prepared by:
Gary Smith & E. King

This activity includes two questionnaires:

1) for the student to fill out specifically, titled, "Are You An Ethnic?"
2) for the student to fill out reflecting his family's opinions as much as possible, titled:
"Examining the Extent of Transnational Linkages in Your Family's Life"

Directions for the Teacher:

Introduction: These questionnaires are an activity to help students to think about the place of ethnicity in their lives and the lives of their families. Begin first with the questionnaire, "Are You An Ethnic?". You may find that some students, particularly those with antecedents that are mainly Anglo-Saxon or from Northern European backgrounds, will show a lesser degree of ethnic identification and consciousness than will other students who identify with eithni minority groups (Black,Mexican-American) or white ethnic groups of Southern European ties.

Objectives of the Activity:

1) to recognize the place of ethnic identification and group consciousness in the students' personal and family identities and heritage.
2) to recognize the relationship between transnational linkages and ethnic identity.

Procedure:

1) Distribute copies of Student Survey I, "Are You An Ethnic?" Instruct students to take it home with them and fill it out as a homework assignments. Explain that information from parents and relatives will probably be necessary in completing this first questionnaire, but that a second part definitely will need the opinions and reactions of family members to obtain the necessary information in completing the question.

2) Next day or shortly afterward; some follow-up questions the teacher can ask to stimulate discussion about the findings from the first student questionnaire:

a) ask students to comment on any problems they might have had filling out the survey.

b) how many students learned things about their own ethnic identity that they hadn't realized before? Ask those who volunteer to comment on what they might have learned from their filling out the questionnaire. (Some possible items of information might be: degree of transnational linkage, at what point in American history their family could have been considered an "immigrant family"; that their ethnic identity means more than they realized, or, in contrast, that their ethnic identity appears to not be very important at this point in their lives.

c) for those of your students who have concluded that at this time that ethnicity holds little for them in terms of their own identity, stimulate a discussion of why this seems to be so. Some students may remark that they feel more "American" than they do, say, Greek or Irish or some other nationality or ethnic sub-group. Try to elicit reasons why this seems to be so. This should lead to the presentation of the second questionnaire, titled, Examining the"Extent of Transnational Linkages in your Family's Life".

d) distribute copies of Questionnaire II. Discuss the questions on this instrument briefly with the students and point out that this requires reactions and comments from some members of their family to assess their opinions on the degree of contact and affiliation the family members hold with the homeland or mother country.

Culminating Activity:

1. After giving the students sufficient time to obtain opinions and reactions from several members of their family on the second questionnaire, discuss the results with the class as a group. Do some students find that their ethnic identity seems less important to them than to their parents or other relatives? If this is so, ask the students why they suppose this is? If not, what seems to be the reasons for this situation? Are their differing degrees of ethnic identification between different ethnic affiliations to specific homelands or mother countries? What seems to be the reasons for this situation?

2. Have the students write several paragraphs or more on the following topic: CONSIDERING THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE RECENTLY GATHERED ON YOUR ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION AND YOUR PERSONAL FEELINGS AT THIS TIME, DISCUSS THE TOPIC "WHAT ETHNICITY MEANS TO ME".

3. This activity should provide the foundations for further investigation in the area of ethnic studies in your school program.

Questionnaire I

Are You and Ethnic?

Purpose: To determine the extent of your ethnic affiliation via an examination of your family's history

1. Were you born in the United States?
   Yes
   No

2. Were one, or neither of your parents born in the U.S.?
   Yes
   No

3. How many of your grandparents were born in the United States?
   0 1 2 3 4

4. How many of your great-grandparents were born in the United States?
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

5. List the countries from which your ancestors came:

   _____ _____

   _____ _____

   _____ _____

6. What language is spoken in your home (at least 75% percent of the time)?
   A) English
   B) Spanish
   C) Other?_____

7. Has your family always spoken the same language?
   Yes
   No
   If not, what other languages were spoken?

   _____

   When did these linguistic changes occur?

   _____

   What, can you determine, caused the changes in language ?

   _____

8. Has your family name been changed at any time in the past?
   Yes
   No
   If so, when did it change?

   _____

Why was the name changed?

_____

9. Does your family retain ties with another country?
   Yes
   No

   If so, in what ways does your family retain ties?

   _____

   _____

10. Have there been changes in religious affiliation in your family's history?
    Yes
    No
    If so, when did these changes occur?

    _____

    What were the reasons for the changes?

    _____

11. Do you or other members of your family have close relatives living in another country?
    Yes
    No

    Reasons?_____

12. To what extent do you think your family has retained its affiliation with its original homeland(s)?

    _____

13. Do you consider yourself to have strong ethnic identity?
    Yes
    No
    If yes, why?_____

    If not, why not?_____

Activity: How Important Is Ethnicity to Me?
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE II

Examining The Extent of Transnational Linkages in My Family Life

Purpose: To assess the extent of transnational linkages and activities among the members of your family.

1. To what extent does your family keep up on events in the homeland?

   a) not at all b) a little c) much

   The homeland or mother country is_____

   Further Comments:

2. Does your family subscribe to newspapers in the language of the homeland?

   a) yes b) no

   Are they published or printed in the homeland?

   a) yes b) no

   Further comments:

3. Does the political scene in the homeland in any way influence your family's political affiliations or actions?

   a) yes b) no

   Further comments:

4. To what degree are members of your family interested in U.S. Foreign policy in relation to the homeland or mother country?

   a) none b) little C) some d) much
   Further comments:

5. Does your family follow practices and customs that might be found in the homeland?

   A) yes B) no

   Comments:

6. Have you or members of your family visited the homeland once? more than once?

   a) yes b) no c) how many times?

   If you have visited the homeland, for what purpose? such as business, to see relatives, for cultural ties, etc.
   Further comments:

7. Are you and your family proud to state that you have roots in the homeland or mother country?

   Comment:

   Do you or members of the family take offense at being called a _____ (member of that ethnic group)?
   Comment:

8. Do members of your family feel that what happens in the mother country has a direct influence on life here in the United States?

   a) some b) a little c) a great deal

   Comments: